

**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION**  
**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**  
**Compiled by the Research and Planning Division**

**How many inmates are incarcerated by the Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC)?**

On January 1, 2016 there were 9,096 criminally sentenced inmates in the jurisdiction of the DOC. There were 542 individuals housed as civil commitments and 376 pre-trial detainees in the DOC. The total jurisdiction population was 10,014.

**How many Massachusetts inmates are incarcerated in other jurisdictions' facilities?**

On January 1, 2016 there were 90 DOC inmates housed in other state or federal correctional facilities, and 429 DOC inmates housed in county correctional facilities. Two DOC inmates were housed in a juvenile facility.

**How many institutions do you have and how many security levels are there?**

The Department has 17 institutions and 4 security levels: Maximum, Medium, Minimum and Pre-Release.

**What is the DOC overcrowding rate?**

The total custody overcrowding rate for DOC facilities as of December 28, 2015 was 123%. The overcrowding rate for medium security facilities was 133%. Overcrowding rate is based on a snapshot at year-end 2015.

**What is the average cost to house an inmate per year?**

For Fiscal Year 2015, the average cost per year to house an inmate in the Massachusetts DOC was \$55,752.06.

**Criminally Sentenced Inmates**

**What is the gender breakdown of the inmate population?**

Of the 9,096 criminally sentenced inmates in DOC jurisdiction on January 1, 2016, 459 (5%) were female and 8,637 (95%) were male.

**What is the racial/Hispanic ethnicity composition of the inmate population?**

Inmates serving criminal sentences on January 1, 2016 reported the following race/ethnicity: White - 3,857 (42%), Black - 2,551 (28%), Hispanic - 2,427 (27%), Asian - 123 (1%), Other - 87 (1%), American Indian/Alaskan Native - 50 (<1%), and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander - 1 (<1%).

**How many "lifers" are incarcerated in Massachusetts DOC facilities?**

On January 1, 2016, there were 2,006 inmates serving a life sentence. Of the 2,006, there were 1,016 inmates serving a first-degree life sentence and 965 serving a second degree sentence. The remaining 25 were serving an out of state life sentence including first degree (19) and second degree life sentences (6).

**How many people are committed to the DOC in a year?**

There were 2,390 new criminal court commitments to the DOC during 2015; 1,725 males and 665 females.

**How many people are released from the DOC in a year?**

During the year 2015, there were 3,329 criminally sentenced inmates released from both DOC facilities, as well as facilities in other jurisdictions. Of these releases, 2,582 (78%) were released to the street: 734 via parole, 1,789 through expiration of sentence and 59 court release/drug lab. Of the 3,329 inmates released, 813 were female and 2,516 were male.

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**What is the average time served?**

The estimated time served for state criminally sentenced males, including all inmates released to the street from a sentence at the DOC due to expiration of sentence, parole, court release, or payment of fines in 2015, was about 3.6 years. For females, the average time served for **state** criminally sentenced releases to the street was about 2.6 years; and 154 days (5.1 months) for **county** criminally sentenced releases to the street. Inmates with life sentences were not included in the above noted numbers due to significantly longer stays and differences in sentence structure.

Time served is calculated by adding together an inmate's jail credits and their length of stay<sup>1</sup>. To clarify, each is defined as:

**Jail credits** are days of credit for time served awaiting trial. The DOC does not award or take away jail credits; pre-trial confinement is determined by the courts.

**Length of stay** is the total number of days an inmate is incarcerated on the same DOC commitment number within the DOC jurisdiction population; the total number of days may include time from multiple admission and releases on that same commitment number.

**Time Served** is defined as the sum of an inmate's total length of stay on the same commitment number within the DOC jurisdiction population including jail credit days.

**What is the recidivism rate?**

A 3 year recidivism study of 2,346 criminally sentenced inmates released from DOC institutions in 2012<sup>2</sup> yielded the following results: within the first year post-release 411 (18%) of the 2,346 released inmates recidivated, an additional 211(9%) recidivated in the second year post-release, and another 131 (6%) recidivated within the third year post-release. The overall recidivism rate for inmates released in 2012 over the span of 3 years was 32%.

The Massachusetts Department of Correction (MADOC) defines a recidivist as any criminally sentenced inmate released to the street from MADOC jurisdiction who is re-incarcerated in a Massachusetts state or county facility or to a federal facility for a criminal sentence within three years of their release to the street.

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<sup>1</sup> All measures of **inmate time served** were done using the median, which is preferred to the average when examining time served due to the skewed nature of the variable; the average has a tendency to produce greatly inflated values.

<sup>2</sup> Starting in 2008, the cohort includes MA DOC inmates released from county, federal and out of state facilities.